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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
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09/308,607 05/20/99 UMEZU

Y 34650/DBF

EXAMINER

HM22/0425

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JOYNES, R
ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1615
DATE MAILED:

04/25/01

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/308,607

Applicant(s)

UMEZU ET AL.

Examiner

Robert M. Joynes

Art Unit

1615

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 November 2000.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

- 15) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 16) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 17) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 18) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____
- 19) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 20) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Receipt is acknowledged of applicants' Election of Claims filed November 13, 2000. Applicant's election without traverse of Group I, Claims 1-5 in Paper No. 4 is acknowledged.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Urist (US 4596574) in view of Gombotz et al. (US 5019400). Urist teaches a porous ceramic system with an active agent impregnated on the ceramic (Col. 2, lines 13-44; Col. 3, lines 45-53). The porous ceramic is comprised of physiologically acceptable, biodegradable salt, specifically a phosphate, more specifically tricalcium phosphate (Col. 2, lines 22-30). The porous ceramics are sintered to reduce their solubility (Col. 2, lines 31-38; Col. 3, lines 58-63). The

active agent, bone morphogenetic protein (BMP), is then impregnated into the pores of the ceramic (Col. 3, lines 45-53).

Urist does not teach the method of making the porous ceramics.

Gombotz et al. teaches a method of creating microspheres by dropping a solution of a polymer into a liquid gas such as liquid nitrogen to form the microspheres (Col. 4, lines 14-38). While Gombotz et al. does not specifically teach the use of a phosphate in such a process, it does stand for the general method of preparing a microparticle by dropping a solution into a liquid gas.

At the time the invention was made it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to sinter porous ceramic particles and impregnate the porous ceramics with an active agent. It would have also been obvious to prepare the ceramic particles by dropping a solution of a polymer or phosphate into a liquid gas (liquid nitrogen) to form porous microparticles.

One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to do this to prepare microparticles through a process that is quick, simply, and inexpensive while creating a sustained release carrier.

Therefore, the invention as a whole would have been *prima facie* obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made.

Correspondence


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Robert M. Joyner whose telephone number is (703) 308-8869. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 8:30 - 5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thurman K. Page can be reached on (703) 308-2927.

The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 305-3592 for regular communications and (703) 305-3592 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1235.

Robert M. Joynes
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 1615
April 23, 2001


THURMAN K. PAGE
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
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